

CLAIMS

We claim:

1 1. A method of managing the transfer of content to a user device that is
2 communicatively linked to a computer network, comprising:
3 obtaining user device information descriptive of a configuration of the user device;
4 determining capabilities of the user device to download content over the network and
5 to process content received over the network based upon the user device information;
6 automatically selecting a service level that is available to the user device for
7 transferring content thereto based upon the determined capabilities of the user device,
8 wherein a service level is associated with one or more characteristics of content for transfer to
9 the user device.

1 2. A method as defined in claim 1, additionally comprising:
2 receiving a request to transfer content to the user device over the computer network;
3 and
4 causing content to be transferred to the user device over the network according to the
5 selected service level.

1 3. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein a service level is also associated with
2 one or more characteristics of the manner in which content is transferred to the user device
3 over the network.

1 4. A method as defined in claim 1, additionally comprising:
2 identifying a list of content that can be transferred to the user device based upon the
3 determined capabilities of the user device;
4 causing the list of content to be displayed at the user device.

1 5. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the user device information includes
2 the amount of data that can be transmitted to the user device in a given amount of time over
3 the network.

1 6. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the user device information includes
2 the latency of the user device with respect to a content provider device on the computer
3 network.

1 7. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the user device information includes
2 the amount of data storage capacity available to the user device.

1 14. A method as defined in claim 13, additionally comprising notifying the user
2 device of changes that may be made to the configuration of the user device in order to
3 upgrade the capabilities of the user device.

1 15. A method as defined in claim 14, additionally comprising sending one or more
2 advertisements to the user device regarding changes that may be made to the configuration of
3 the user device.

1 16. A method of managing the transfer of content to a user device that is
2 communicatively linked to a computer network, comprising:
3 obtaining user device information descriptive of a configuration of the user device;
4 identifying one or more service levels that may govern the transfer of content to the
5 user device, wherein each service level is associated with one or more characteristics of
6 content available for transfer to the user device and the manner in which content is
7 transferred to the user device over the network, each service level being further associated
8 with minimum requirements relating to the configuration of the user device;
9 making available at least one of the service levels to the user device for governing the
10 transfer of content to the user device;
11 automatically selecting a service level to govern the transfer of content to the user
12 device based upon the user device information.

1 17. A method as defined in claim 16, further comprising:
2 receiving a request to transfer content to the user device over the computer network;
3 causing content to be transmitted to the user device according to the selected service
4 level.

1 18. A method as defined in claim 16, additionally comprising:
2 making a service level available to the user device only if the configuration of the
3 user device meets the minimum requirements for the service level.

1 19. A method as defined in claim 16, wherein at least one of the service levels is
2 made unavailable to the user device because the configuration of the user device does not
3 meet the requirements of the service level.

1 20. A method as defined in claim 19 additionally comprising providing
2 information to the user device regarding the unavailable service level.

1 21. A method as defined in claim 20, additionally comprising notifying the user
2 device of changes that may be made to the configuration of the user device in order to meet
3 the minimum requirements of the unavailable service level.

1 22. A method as defined in claim 21, additionally comprising sending one or more
2 advertisements to the user device regarding changes that may be made to the configuration of
3 the user device.

1 23. A method as defined in claim 16, wherein the user device information
2 includes the amount of data that can be transmitted to the user device in a given amount of
3 time over the network.

1 24. A method as defined in claim 16, wherein the user device information
2 includes the latency of the user device with respect to a content provider device on the
3 computer network.

1 25. A method as defined in claim 16, wherein the user device information
2 includes the amount of data storage capacity available to the user device.

1 26. A method as defined in claim 16, wherein the one or more characteristics of
2 content includes the size of the content.

1 27. A method as defined in claim 16, wherein the one or more characteristics of
2 content includes whether the content comprises graphic files.

1 28. A method as defined in claim 16, wherein the one or more characteristics of
2 content includes whether the content is an executable file.

1 29. A method as defined in claim 16, wherein the manner in which the content is
2 transferred to the user device comprises streaming the content to the user device.

1 30. A program product including a recording medium that stores a program
2 readable and executable by an information processing system to cause the information
3 processing system to perform processing that manages the transfer of content to a user device
4 that is communicatively linked to a computer network, the program including instructions for
5 causing the information processing system to execute:

6 a first process comprising obtaining user device information descriptive of a
7 configuration of the user device;

8 a second process comprising, determining capabilities of the user device to download
9 content over the network and to process content received over the network based upon the
10 user device information;

11 a third process comprising, automatically selecting a service level that is available to
12 the user device for transferring content thereto based upon the determined capabilities of the
13 user device, wherein a service level is associated with one or more characteristics of content
14 for transfer to the user device.

1 31. The program product of claim 30, the program further including instructions
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a processes comprising:
3 receiving a request to transfer content to the user device over the computer network;
4 causing content to be transferred to the user device over the network according to the
5 selected service level.

1 32. The program product of claim 30, wherein a service level is also associated
2 with one or more characteristics of the manner in which content is transferred to the user
3 device over the network.

1 33. The program product of claim 30, wherein the user device information
2 includes the amount of data that can be transmitted to the user device in a given amount of
3 time over the network.

1 34. The program product of claim 30 wherein the user device information
2 includes the latency of the user device with respect to a content provider device on the
3 computer network.

1 35. The program product of claim 30, wherein the user device information
2 includes the amount of data storage capacity available to the user device.

1 36. The program product of claim 30, wherein the one or more characteristics of
2 content associated with a service level includes the size of the content.

1 37. The program product of claim 30, wherein the one or more characteristics of
2 content includes whether the content includes graphic files.

1 38. The program product of claim 30, wherein the one or more characteristics of
2 content includes whether the content is an executable file.

1 39. The program product of claim 32, wherein the manner in which the content is
2 transferred to the user device comprises streaming the content to the user device.

1 40. The program product of claim 30, wherein a first service level has a
2 corresponding minimum capabilities requirement, and wherein the program further includes
3 instructions for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprising
4 selecting a first service level for the user device only if the capabilities of the user device
5 meet the minimum capabilities requirements.

1 41. The program product of claim 40, the program further including instructions
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprising, if the

3 capabilities of the user device do not meet the minimum capabilities requirement of the user
4 device, notifying the user device that the minimum capabilities requirements are not met.

1 42. The program product of claim 41, the program further including instructions
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprising notifying the
3 user device of changes that may be made to the configuration of the user device in order to
4 upgrade the capabilities of the user device.

1 43. The program product of claim 42, the program further including instructions
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprising sending one
3 or more advertisements to the user device regarding changes that may be made to the
4 configuration of the user device.

1 44. A program product that includes a recording medium that stores a program
2 readable and executable by an information processing system to cause the information
3 processing system to manage the transfer of content to a user device that is communicatively
4 linked to a computer network, the program including instructions for causing the information
5 processing system to execute:

6 a first process comprising obtaining user device information descriptive of a
7 configuration of the user device;

8 a second process comprising identifying one or more service levels that may govern
9 the transfer of content to the user device, wherein each service level is associated with one or
10 more characteristics of content available for transfer to the user device and the manner in
11 which content is transferred to the user device over the network, each service level being
12 further associated with minimum requirements relating to the configuration of the user
13 device;

14 a third process comprising making available at least one of the service levels to the
15 user device for governing the transfer of content to the user device;

16 a fourth process comprising, automatically selecting a service level to govern the
17 transfer of content to the user device based upon the user device information.

1 45. The program product of claim 44, the program further including instructions
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprising:
3 receiving a request to transfer content to the user device over the computer network;
4 causing content to be transmitted to the user device according to the selected service
5 level.

1 46. The program product of claim 44, the program further including instructions
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprising:
3 making a service level available to the user device only if the configuration of the
4 user device meets the minimum requirements for the service level.

1 47. The program product of claim 44, wherein at least one of the service levels is
2 made unavailable to the user device because the configuration of the user device does not
3 meet the requirements of the service level.

1 48. The program product of claim 47, the program further including instructions
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprising providing
3 information to the user device regarding the unavailable service level.

1 49. The program product of claim 48, the program further including instructions
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprising notifying the
3 user device of changes that may be made to the configuration of the user device in order to
4 meet the minimum requirements of the unavailable service level.

1 50. The program product of claim 49, the program further including instructions
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprising sending one
3 or more advertisements to the user device regarding changes that may be made to the
4 configuration of the user device.

00003300.071101

1 51. The program product of claim 44, wherein the user device information
2 includes the amount of data that can be transmitted to the user device in a given amount of
3 time over the network.

1 52. The program product of claim 44, wherein the user device information
2 includes the latency of the user device with respect to a content provider device on the
3 computer network.

1 53. The program product of claim 44, wherein the user device information
2 includes the amount of data storage capacity available to the user device.

1 54. The program product of claim 44, wherein the one or more characteristics of
2 content includes the size of the content.

1 55. The program product of claim 44, wherein the one or more characteristics of
2 content includes whether the content comprises graphic files.

1 56. The program product of claim 44, wherein the one or more characteristics of
2 content includes whether the content is an executable file.

1 57. The program product of claim 44, wherein the manner in which the content is
2 transferred to the user device comprises streaming the content to the user device.

1 58. An information processing system comprised of an information processor
2 configured to execute program instructions that cause the information processing system to
3 implement one or more processes for managing the transfer of content to a user device that is
4 communicatively linked to a computer network, the processes comprising:

5 a first process comprising obtaining user device information descriptive of a
6 configuration of the user device;

7 a second process comprising, determining capabilities of the user device to download
8 content over the network and to process content received over the network based upon the
9 user device information;

10 a third process comprising, automatically selecting a service level that is available to
11 the user device for transferring content thereto based upon the determined capabilities of the
12 user device, wherein a service level is associated with one or more characteristics of content
13 for transfer to the user device.

1 59. The information processing system of claim 58, wherein the processes further
2 include processes comprised of:

3 receiving a request to transfer content to the user device over the computer network;
4 and

5 transferring content to the user device over the network according to the selected
6 service level.

1 60. The information processing system of claim 58, wherein a service level is
2 associated with one or more characteristics of the manner in which content is transferred to
3 the user device over the network.

1 61. The information processing system of claim 58, wherein the user device
2 information includes the amount of data that can be transmitted to the user device in a given
3 amount of time over the network.

1 62. The information processing system of claim 58, wherein the user device
2 information includes the latency of the user device with respect to a content provider device
3 on the computer network.

1 63. The information processing system of claim 58, wherein the user device
2 information includes the amount of data storage capacity available to the user device.

1 64. The information processing system of claim 58, wherein the one or more
2 characteristics of content associated with a service level includes the size of the content.

1 65. The information processing system of claim 58, wherein the one or more
2 characteristics of content includes whether the content includes graphic files.

1 66. The information processing system of claim 58, wherein the one or more
2 characteristics of content includes whether the content is an executable file.

1 67. The information processing system of claim 60, wherein the manner in which
2 the content is transferred to the user device comprises streaming the content to the user
3 device.

1 68. The information processing system of claim 58, wherein a first service level
2 has a corresponding minimum capabilities requirement, and wherein the processes further
3 include a process comprised of selecting a first service level for the user device only if the
4 capabilities of the user device meet the minimum capabilities requirements.

1 69. The information processing system of claim 68, wherein the processes further
2 include a process comprised of, if the capabilities of the user device do not meet the
3 minimum capabilities requirement of the user device, notifying the user device that the
4 minimum capabilities requirements are not met.

1 70. The information processing system of claim 69, wherein the processes further
2 include a process comprised of notifying the user device of changes that may be made to the
3 configuration of the user device in order to upgrade the capabilities of the user device.

1 71. The information processing system of claim 70, wherein the processes further
2 include a process comprised of sending one or more advertisements to the user device
3 regarding changes that may be made to the configuration of the user device.

1 72. An information processing system comprised of an information processor
2 configured to execute program instructions that cause the information processing system to
3 implement one or more processes for managing the transfer of content to a user device that is
4 communicatively linked to a computer network, the processes comprising:

5 a first process comprising obtaining user device information descriptive of a
6 configuration of the user device;

7 a second process comprising identifying one or more service levels that may govern
8 the transfer of content to the user device, wherein each service level is associated with one or
9 more characteristics of content available for transfer to the user device and the manner in
10 which content is transferred to the user device over the network, each service level being
11 further associated with minimum requirements relating to the configuration of the user
12 device;

0000300-071101

13 a third process comprising making available at least one of the service levels to the
14 user device for governing the transfer of content to the user device;
15 a fourth process comprising, automatically selecting a service level to govern the
16 transfer of content to the user device based upon the user device information.

1 73. The information processing system of claim 72, wherein the processes further
2 include a process comprised of:
3 receiving a request to transfer content to the user device over the computer network;
4 causing content to be transmitted to the user device according to the selected service
5 level.

1 74. The information processing system of claim 72, wherein the processes further
2 include a process comprised:
3 making a service level available to the user device only if the configuration of the
4 user device meets the minimum requirements for the service level.

1 75. The information processing system of claim 72, wherein at least one of the
2 service levels is made unavailable to the user device because the configuration of the user
3 device does not meet the requirements of the service level.

1 76. The information processing system of claim 75, wherein the processes further
2 include a process comprised of providing information to the user device regarding the
3 unavailable service level.

1 77. The information processing system of claim 76, wherein the processes further
2 include a process comprised of notifying the user device of changes that may be made to the
3 configuration of the user device in order to meet the minimum requirements of the
4 unavailable service level.

1 78. The information processing system of claim 77, wherein the processes further
2 include a process comprised of sending one or more advertisements to the user device
3 regarding changes that may be made to the configuration of the user device.

1 79. The information processing system of claim 72, wherein the user device
2 information includes the amount of data that can be transmitted to the user device in a given
3 amount of time over the network.

1 80. The information processing system of claim 72, wherein the user device
2 information includes the latency of the user device with respect to a content provider device
3 on the computer network.

1 81. The information processing system of claim 72, wherein the user device
2 information includes the amount of data storage capacity available to the user device.

1 82. The information processing system of claim 72, wherein the one or more
2 characteristics of content includes the size of the content.

1 83. The information processing system of claim 72, wherein the one or more
2 characteristics of content includes whether the content comprises graphic files.

1 84. The information processing system of claim 72, wherein the one or more
2 characteristics of content includes whether the content is an executable file.

1 85. The information processing system of claim 72, wherein the manner in which
2 the content is transferred to the user device comprises streaming the content to the user
3 device.